

MORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 23, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR

✓ Henry Kissinger  
Peter Flanigan

Subject: Post-Apollo Space Cooperation with the Europeans

Background

It was agreed at our meeting with Jim Fletcher on April 23, 1971, that NASA should prepare an evaluation of (1) the degree of technology transfer to the Europeans, which would take place if the proposed U.S. -European cooperation on development of a space transportation system (STS) were to materialize; and (2) alternative subjects for U.S. -European cooperation. I have **now reviewed** NASA's informal paper (summary attached) and discussed the subject with Jim Fletcher, who concurs with the course of action recommended in this memorandum.

Pending further consideration of the details of the NASA analysis, and additional discussions at the technical level between the U.S. and European space groups, I am not prepared to have the U.S. commit itself to this cooperative program of STS development. Although the NASA study (concurred in by Jim Fletcher) suggests that the technology transfer question as well as management complications are not of significant proportions, my personal concerns on these points have not yet been answered to my full satisfaction, nor can they be answered until there is a better understanding of the potential European contribution. Furthermore, U.S. shuttle planning is not sufficiently definitive at present to permit any agreement on the shuttle with the Europeans in the near future. Nonetheless, I do believe that a resumption of technical-level discussions with the Europeans would be in order at this time for the purpose of more clearly defining, without any precommitment, the potential interests and contributions of both sides.

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It is also apparent from recent telegrams from Europe that a reply to Minister Theo LeFevre's letter to Alex Johnson of March 3, requesting a statement of the U.S. position on post-Apollo space cooperation, cannot be delayed much longer. Europe's space officials must move ahead with their own planning for the future. I believe this matter can be resolved by separating the issue into two components and addressing each separately.

The urgent question before the Europeans is whether U.S. launchers will be available at a fair price and on a non-discriminatory basis for launching European satellites. If the answer is no, the Europeans will likely proceed to develop their own EUROPA-III launch vehicle, with little or no funds left for cooperation with the U.S. in any area; if yes, they will most probably abandon their launcher development plans, freeing funds for increased cooperation with the U.S. and/or for other space developments of their own.

The first alternative would require European expenditures of almost a billion dollars to build a launch capability which has already existed in the United States for several years. In the process, it will doubtless engender some bitterness on the part of those countries who oppose this choice on practical grounds, but would feel constrained to support it on political grounds. However, this approach will by 1976-78 provide the Europeans with a capability to launch their own geosynchronous satellites independently of U.S. views or influence.

The second alternative would perpetuate European dependence on the U.S. for launch services, would generate sales for U.S. booster manufacturing firms, and would preserve the chance for a major European input to a cooperative program with the U.S. This alternative would seem more attractive than the first for longer-range U.S. interests.

Although the availability of U.S. launchers might also enable the Europeans to compete with U.S. firms for satellite construction contracts from other countries, both the U.S. aerospace industry and I believe that this would not be a significant commercial threat, in view of our vastly superiority satellite technology.

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Recommendation

Accordingly, I propose that we separate the two elements of launch assurances and space cooperation and that State be advised to proceed along the lines of the attached draft letter to Bill Rogers. If you are in agreement, I believe this course of action provides a satisfactory exit from the present impasse.



Edward E. David, Jr.  
Science Adviser

Attachments